

Chapter 1: The Missouri Early Intervention System Infrastructure

The general purpose statement of Part C, through § 303 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is:

- a) to ensure that a variety of interagency coordination structures are in place at the state and federal level to maintain and implement a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers and their families;
- b) to facilitate the coordination of payment for early intervention services from Federal, State, local, and private sources (including public and private insurance coverage;
- c) to enhance the States' capacity to provide quality early intervention services and expand and improve existing early intervention services being provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; and
- d) to enhance the capacity of the State and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of historically underrepresented populations, particularly minority, low-income, inner-city, and rural populations.

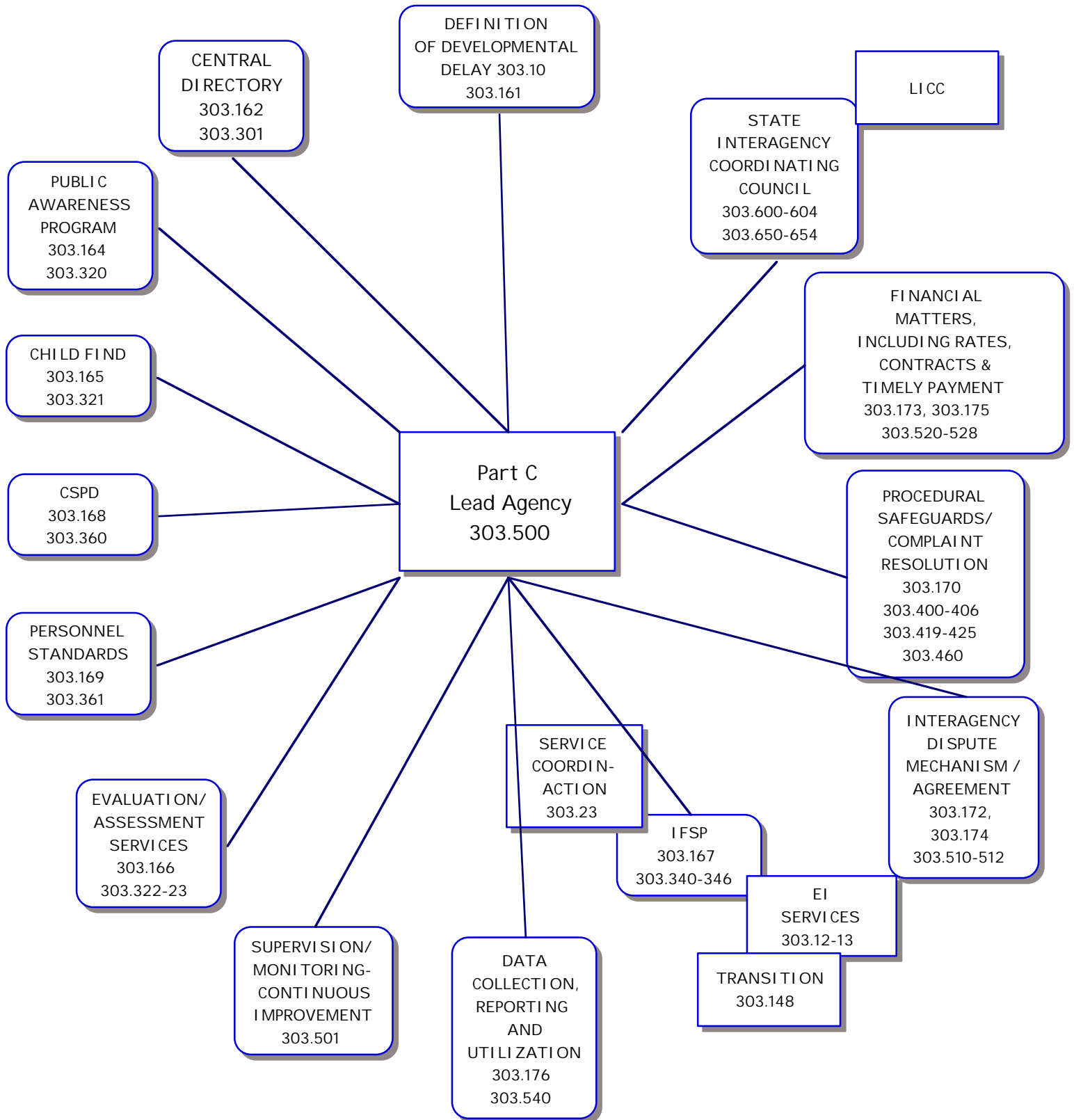
The minimum components of a state's Early Intervention System, identified in 20 U.S.C. 1476 and 34 CFR 303, include the following:

- a) A state definition of developmental delay
- b) A central directory of information relating to early intervention services, resources, experts and research and demonstration projects available in the state

Federal Part C Components Chart

- c) Timetables for serving eligible infants and toddlers and their families
- d) A public awareness program
- e) A comprehensive child find system
- f) Evaluation and assessment procedures
- g) Development, review and evaluation of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and service coordination including policies to ensure that services are provided in natural environments to the maximum extent appropriate.
- h) A comprehensive system of personnel development
- i) Development and implementation of personnel standards
- j) Development and implementation of procedural safeguards
- k) General administration, supervision, and monitoring of the early intervention system
- l) Procedures for resolving complaints
- m) Policies and procedures related to financial matters, including the following:
 - a. the identification and coordination of all resources in the state available for early intervention services
 - b. the timely reimbursement of funds provided by the United States
 - c. the assignment of financial responsibility among the participating agencies
- n) Interagency agreements for resolution of disputes
- o) Policies for contracting or otherwise arranging for services
- p) Data collection on the numbers of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in the state

Federal Part C Components



Missouri's implementation of Part C is through the First Steps system, reflected in the interagency partnerships between the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education, Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, and Social Services.

Missouri First Steps
Organizational Chart

Division Functional
Organization Chart

State Lead Agency (§303.500)

Federal regulations require that each state's governor designate or establish a lead agency to be responsible for the following:

- General administration, supervision and monitoring of Part C programs and activities
- Identification and coordination of all available resources
- Assignment of financial responsibility to appropriate agencies
- Development of procedures to ensure services are provided in a timely manner pending resolution of disputes among agencies
- Resolution of intra- and interagency disputes; and
- Entry into formal interagency agreements that define the financial responsibility of each agency for paying for early intervention service (consistent with State law) and procedures for resolving disputes and that include all additional components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation and coordination.

In Missouri, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is the designated lead agency. As lead agency, the DESE is responsible for ensuring that the minimum components of a statewide system of early intervention services for eligible infants and toddlers and their families, as required by the United States Department of

Education are established and maintained in the state.

The Division of Special Education (DSE) at the DESE is the division assigned the responsibility for overseeing the Missouri First Steps System. The DSE organization chart shows the organization of the DSE and the various First Steps components for which each DSE section is responsible.

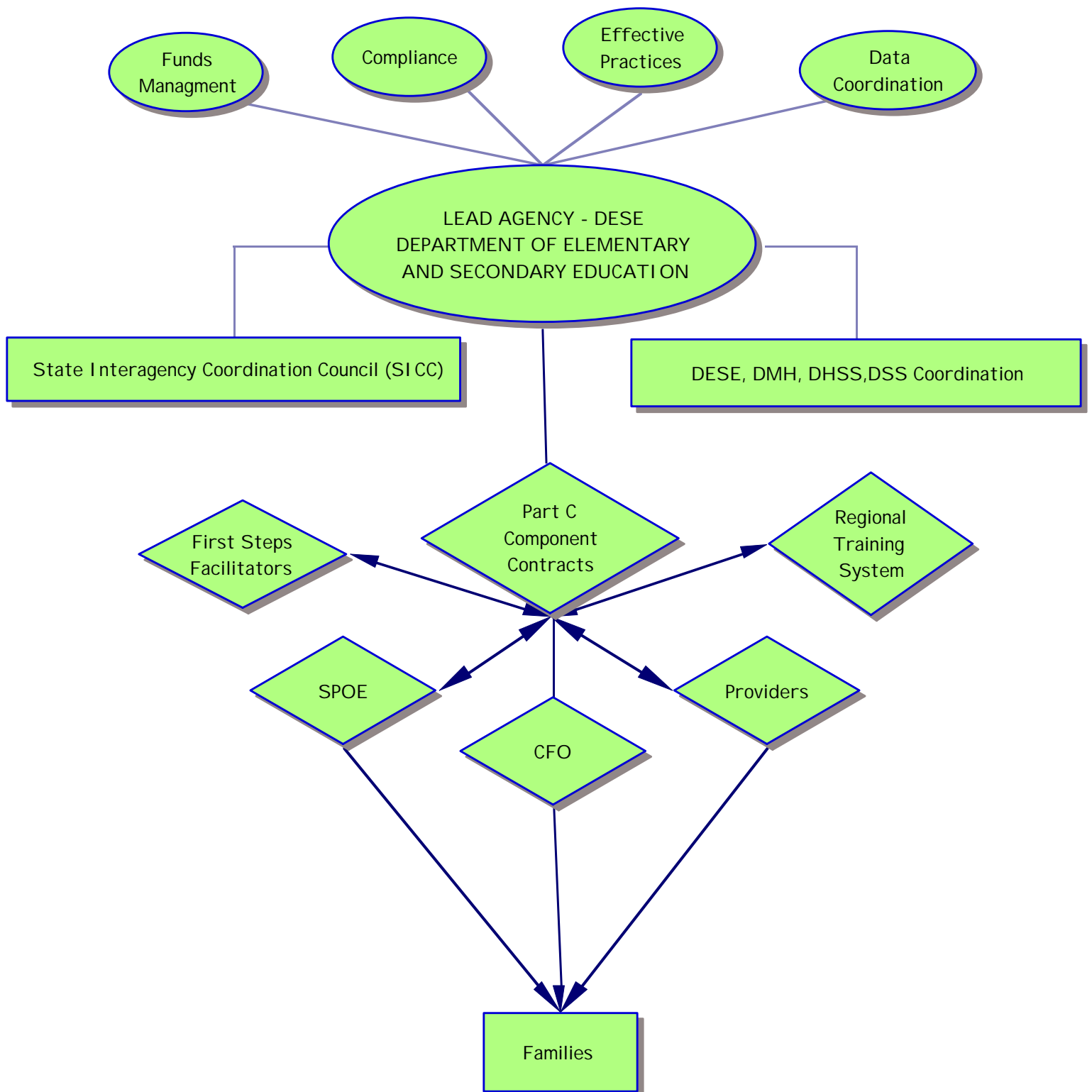
State Interagency Coordinating Council **(§303.600)**

The Governor makes all appointments to the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC). In making an appointment to the Council, the Governor must ensure that the membership of the Council, as defined in federal regulations (§303.601), reasonably represents the population of the state in terms of its diversity and geography and meets the required membership set forth in federal statute and federal and state regulations.

The membership of the SICC is clearly spelled out in §303.601.
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To comply with Missouri's Open Meetings Law, all meetings are announced at least one week in advance and at a minimum of 24 hours in advance at the location of the meeting, as well as at DESE. SICC meeting dates are announced on the DESE website. These procedures ensure that meetings are announced sufficiently in advance to ensure attendance and that they are open and accessible to the public. Interpreters for the deaf and other necessary services for both SICC members and participants are provided. If individual accommodations are needed, persons need to call DESE to request these in advance of the SICC meeting. Part C funds are used to pay for these

Missouri First Steps Organizational Chart



DESE Division of Special Education Functional Organization

Assistant Commissioner				
	Special Education Administration		Special Education Programs	
Sections	Funds Management 751-0622	Data Coordination 526-0299	Effective Practices 751-0187	Compliance 751-0699
Functions	Grants management Contract management Payments Funds management Approved private agencies	Data collection/ dissemination Technical report production Website management	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First Steps training Technical assistance related to effective practices issues	Technical assistance & training related to compliance issues Program monitoring Due Process management Child complaint management Educational Surrogates
(1) The division also operates the following programs: Sheltered Workshops, State Schools for the Severely Handicapped, Missouri School for the Blind and Missouri School for the Deaf.				

services as well as for all meeting costs and supports for participating members.

Functions of the SICC (§303.650)

The functions of the SICC are to:

1. Advise and assist the DESE in the development and implementation of policies that constitute the statewide system;
2. Assist the DESE in achieving full participation, coordination, and cooperation of all appropriate public agencies;
3. Assist the DESE in the implementation of the statewide system by establishing a process that includes:
 - a) seeking information from service providers, service coordinators, parents, and others about any federal, state, or local policies that impede timely service delivery; and
 - b) taking steps to ensure those policy problems identified under 3a above are resolved; and,
4. Assist the DESE to the extent appropriate, in the resolution of disputes; and
5. Strengthen service integration for both infants and toddlers with disabilities and at-risk infants and their families, regardless of eligibility status.

In their “advise and assist” capacity, the SICC provides oversight to the First Steps system and helps to make sure that the vision, intent and values of key stakeholders are maintained.

The SICC advises and assists the lead agency in the:

1. Provision of appropriate services for children ages 0-5 inclusive, including transitional services to preschool and other appropriate services;
2. Identification of sources of money and other supports for services for early intervention services;

3. Assignment of fiscal responsibilities to the appropriate agency;
4. Promotion of interagency agreements under 34 CFR §303.523.
5. The preparation of applications and amendments to applications under Part C; and
6. Transition of toddlers with disabilities to appropriate services under Part B of IDEA to the extent that those services are appropriate.

The SICC prepares an annual report to the Governor and to the Secretary of the US Department of Education on the status of the early intervention system operated in the State. Each annual report contains information required by the Secretary for the reporting year.

Local Interagency Coordinating Councils

The Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) is an important component of the First Steps early intervention system at the local level. LICC membership typically includes family members of children with disabilities, as well as, service providers, community leaders, and representatives of programs serving children and families. While LICCs are not required by federal regulations, Missouri has determined that support in the development of local councils will help ensure collaboration and coordination and strengthen the First Steps system statewide through local leadership and participation.

LICC activities can provide a vehicle to ensure that:

- Eligible children and families are located and identified as early in the child's life as possible;

LICCs
Membership on the LICC should reflect the SICC membership.

LICCs know their local communities best and are in a good position to identify and coordinate resources and to learn about gaps that may exist. This knowledge can assist them to enhance their community's ability to support families with very young children in places where families live, learn, work and play.

- Families are made aware of all the early intervention services and providers available in their community;
- Children have their eligibility determined quickly and with the least amount of intrusive/duplicative testing conducted;
- All enrolled service providers within the local service area are known, and that any shortages of personnel are identified. This includes maintaining a current version of the Early Intervention Service Matrix to support informed family choice; and
- A System Point of Entry (SPOE) is in place and accessible to families in their geographic area and appropriate linkages are made between the SPOE and referral sources.

LICCs help to identify and recruit local providers to build the capacity of First Steps to respond to the increased enrollment. The Service Matrix is a web-based application and is updated weekly by the Central Finance Office (CFO) to provide a current listing of all enrolled providers.

System Point of Entry (§303.21)

The System Point of Entry (SPOE), through contract with DESE, is the local entity responsible on behalf of the lead agency for ensuring that all referrals of children under the age of three, and their families, receive a timely response and that the various intake functions are conducted with families in a prompt, professional and family-centered manner. Each SPOE serves as the electronic link between First Steps and the Central Finance Office (CFO). Depending upon the local county needs and configuration, there may be one SPOE per county or collaborative situations where more than one county works together for the general operations of a SPOE. All referrals are electronically stored and routine updates to this information are made based upon the information obtained and the decisions made with respect to eligibility, service planning, and service delivery through the development of an IFSP.

SPOEs

The SPOE, on behalf of the DESE, is responsible for ensuring that all opportunities available under Part C of IDEA are made available to families, and that families make decisions based on accurate and timely information, the knowledge of options available to them, and the full understanding of their procedural safeguards under federal and state law.

SPOE contractual functions include, but are not limited to:

Summary of major SPOE contractual functions.
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1. Receiving referrals (by phone, fax, letter or in person)
 - a) Establish the initial Early Intervention record and the electronic record with the CFO;
 - b) Determine if referral will be continued;
 - c) Send acknowledgement letter to referral source;
 - d) Intake Coordinator makes initial contact with family to schedule Intake meeting;
 - e) Determine if child needs an educational surrogate
2. Conducting and completing the family intake
 - a) Share information about First Steps;
 - b) Provide the family with information regarding Parental Rights in the family's native language;
 - c) Provide Notice of Intent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation/assessment of the child and a family assessment and obtain informed written parental consent to proceed;
 - d) Initiate requests for existing child information with informed, written parental consent on a Release of Information;

- e) Assist in the completion of the Combined Enrollment Form, including the social history; and
- f) Update the child's electronic and EI record

3. Ensuring that Eligibility Determination is completed according to regulations

- a) Send signed Release of Information to request existing information about the child;
- b) Review existing information to decide if it is possible to determine eligibility at this point;
- c) If eligibility cannot be determined with existing information, arrange for evaluations necessary to determine eligibility including all required authorizations;
- d) Determine eligibility;
- e) Document the child's eligibility decision on the Eligibility Determination form;
- f) If the child is not eligible, provide Notice of Action for Ineligibility with a copy of their Parental Rights; and
- g) Update the child's electronic and EI record

For eligibility determination procedures see Chapter 6 in the Missouri First Steps Early Intervention Practice Manual

Remember the Parental Rights must be provided in the parent's native language or mode of communication

4. Arranging for and ensuring the completion of necessary activities for IFSP planning

- a) Arrange for assessments needed to complete an IFSP including the family assessment;
- b) Complete authorizations for assessments;

- c) Assist the family with the selection of an ongoing service coordinator from the Service Provider Matrix;
 - d) Share a copy of the IFSP document with the family and complete worksheets and applicable sections of the IFSP with the family prior to the meeting; and
 - e) Plan the IFSP meeting with the family using the IFSP Team Planning Worksheet; and
 - f) Provide written notification of the IFSP meeting to the family and other participants
5. Facilitating the IFSP Team Meeting, and complete the Initial IFSP
- a) Develop an initial IFSP for each eligible child within 45 calendar days of referral;
 - b) Assist family in locating available service provider(s) for identified IFSP services through a review of the Service Provider Matrix;
 - c) Enter required information from the IFSP into the child's electronic record
 - d) Place a copy of the completed IFSP document in the child's EI record and provide a copy of the IFSP to the family and other team members/service providers

The SPOE carries out these contractual functions by ensuring qualified staff will function in the intake coordination role with the primary responsibility to respond to all referrals. These intake coordinators must be provided with adequate administrative supports to ensure that the EI Record between the

SPOE and CFO is maintained and current.
Maintaining current records will also require timely and effective communication between the SPOE and ongoing Service Coordinators.

Maintenance of Records

Each SPOE must develop and maintain the Early Intervention (EI) record for each child referred:

- a) This must be done irrespective of the outcome of the referral (eligible or not, accept or decline services, etc.)
- b) An electronic version, as well as, a hardcopy version (EI) must be maintained
- c) Assist the CFO in updating the electronic EI record as needed and at least annually
- d) Maintain ongoing service documentation including meeting notifications, IFSP reviews and annual revisions, key correspondence, notices, consents and releases in each enrolled EI record

The SPOE must complete administrative functions related to the CFO:

- a) Perform ongoing data entry from information received from the ongoing Service Coordinator to ensure authorization(s) for IFSP services remain current;
- b) Manage the electronic and EI records maintained at the SPOE with materials received from the ongoing Service Coordinator

A variety of entities may be contracted with for SPOE services, including individuals or agencies. A SPOE cannot also be a provider of early intervention

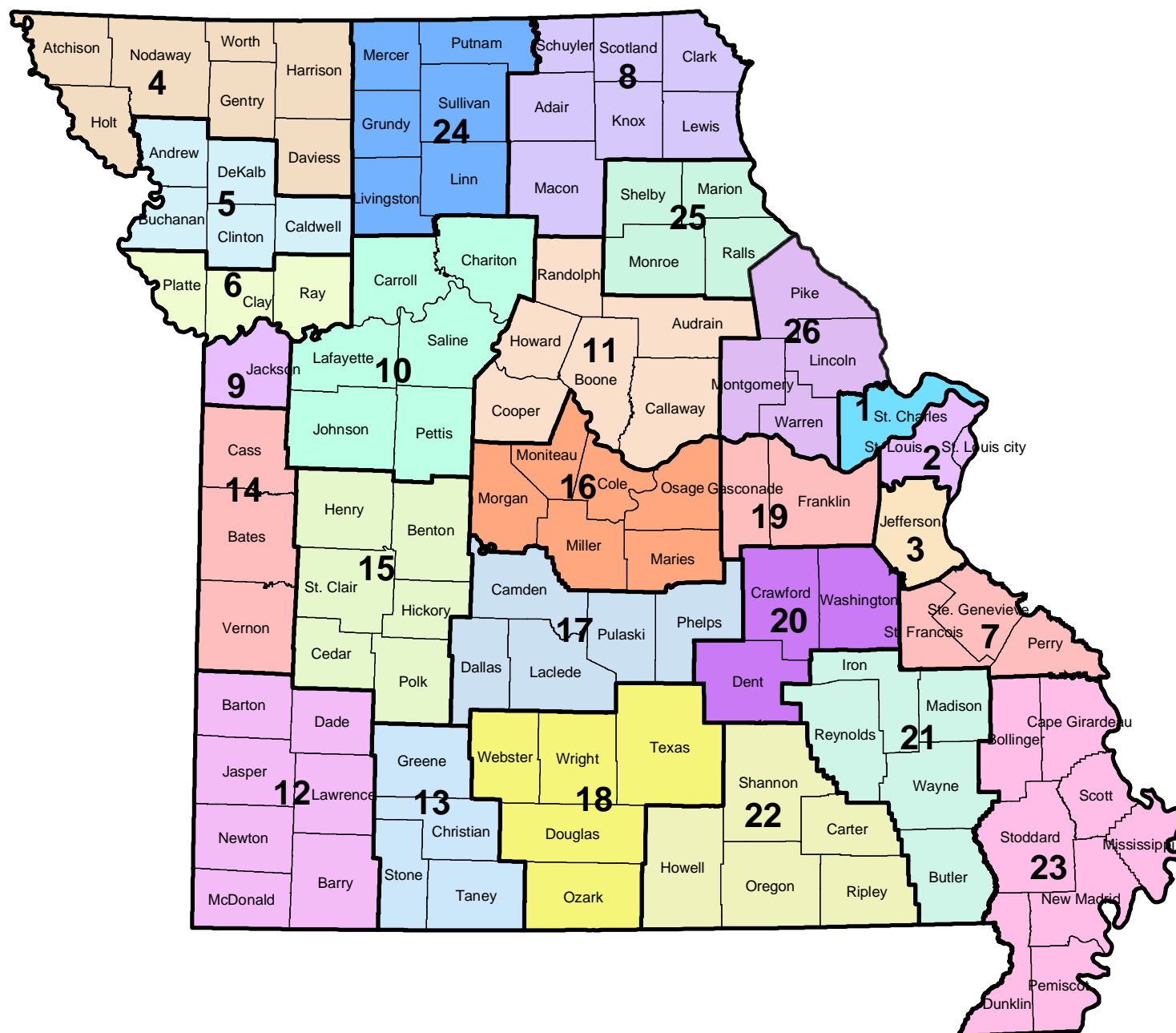
Early
Intervention
Record (EI)

The SPOE must be accessible to individuals with disabilities and available to the general community 52 weeks a year during normal and routine business hours.

See the State Map with a current SPOE listing.

MISSOURI FIRST STEPS

System Point of Entry (SPOE) Regions



services in the SPOE region, with the exception of service coordination.

The Central Finance Office (CFO)

DESE's responsibilities as lead agency include identification and coordination of all available resources, including private resources, to support the First Steps system. In order to address these requirements, DESE uses a Central Finance Office or CFO model for ensuring that all available resources are accessed. The CFO is linked with the provider credential system and maintains the Service Matrix of enrolled First Steps providers.

The CFO authorizes services for eligible children and their families based upon eligibility determination activities or the IFSP, and then pays providers for these services utilizing a fee for service reimbursement approach. The CFO then manages the recovery process with other funding sources, such as MC+, to ensure that the "payor of last resort" requirements are met. Families receive a regular summary of benefits paid on their behalf by the First Steps system.

Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for families on a regular basis.
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The **CFO Function Chart** illustrates the variety of CFO functions as they relate to provider enrollment, family informing, fund management and recovery, and data.

Family Cost Participation

Federal Part C permits states to implement family cost participation mechanisms that would include the use of private insurance and/or sliding fee scales. Currently, Missouri has not implemented any system for family cost participation.

Data Collection, Reporting and Utilization

Each Part C system must collect and provide data as required by the U.S. Department of Education.

The majority of the data collection requirements for the local early intervention system are incorporated into the Central Finance Office (CFO) and System Point of Entry (SPOE) functions. A variety of data are available at the local SPOE for review. Also, routine data summaries that compare activities across the state are distributed statewide by DESE.

